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Aspects of Tukano /Tucano/ Culture: Cosmogony

by Marcos Fulop

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/99/ Commissioned by the Dirección of the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, we are initiating ethnographic studies among the natives of the Comisaría Especial del Vaupes. We have considered it convenient to begin the anthropological study of the cultures of this region with the Tukano /Tucano/ group.

114 [101] 124 128 772 772 769 The material that is published below was gathered during our stay in the settlement of Guadalajara, on the Paca River, from June 13 to July 9, 1953. Our informant was Marcos Sierra, and Manuel Sierra, the brother of the preceding, served as interpreter. Owing to the short time of the investigation and to having consulted only one informant, we are not able to guarantee the exactitude of the version of the Tukano cosmogony given by Marcos Sierra. This cosmogony is repeated in the manner of a cult to the ancestors during the feasts of Dabukurí and Yuruparí.

105 [171] The Tukano culture is actually representative of the cultures of the tropical forests of South America. Their regimen of life is sedentary; they practice horticulture, and bitter yuca (1)

1. Manihot utilissima.

constitutes the basis of their alimentation, which is supplemented with products obtained by means of hunting and fishing; they are efficient in the construction and handling of river vessels; they use the hammock for a bed; they possess the art of ceramics and do not know metalurgy.

131 The Tukano Indians are found located on the lower Vaupés /Uaupés/ River, from the falls of Ipanoré to the outlet of the Vaupés into the Río Negro; on the Tiquié and Papurí /Papury/ rivers; and on small streams that empty into these three rivers.

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888 [593] [571] as well. The fixed relationships of mutual obligation are, as has been seen, between husband and wife, between parents and dependent children, between unmarried brother and sister, and between ceremonial friends. These relationships either do not apply to the aged, or, if they do, they may not be of great value to them. Generally speaking, the aged can depend upon those who are younger and vigorous only for the generalized sib benefits of sustenance and companionship. The deprivation of the aged is in what one might mistakenly call "the nonessentials." There is no one to buy an old lady a new petticoat or to get for an old man commercial tobacco. The aged do not protest such neglect because they acknowledge their lack 888 of claim. Nonetheless, they feel their neglect and loss of status keenly 123 enough. When I was among the *Bahúkiwa*, an aged lady employed all her senile charms to wheedle from me a new petticoat. Her husband, a very proud old man, deigned to accept only an occasional cigarette. From time to time he brought me fish and the old lady fetched me some of her small garden produce to reciprocate my favors.

888 The old must look after themselves. The very old *Bahúkiwa* couple maintained a semblance of an independent household. The old woman, unable to carry a load of manioc, no longer gardened, but she fetched firewood and looked after children. She cooked for her husband. Her daughter-in-law provided her with manioc cake. The old man was still a good fisherman, contributing to the maloca. Besides, he was a consultant on many matters, particularly on trees to be used in manufactures.

[18] The focus of Cubeo culture is upon the vigorous household heads. [769] The aged simply fall out of things. They are entitled to no particular respect, nor have they cause to be feared as spirits-to-be, for the Cubeo are interested only in their first ancestors and not in the spirits of the more recent dead.

DEATH

761 [754] Death may be attributed by the Cubeo to natural causes such as accidents, violence, old age, but if it is the result of illness, it must be laid to some agency that has willed it. The most common agency 763 is human. Whether the agency is human or supernatural the reaction to death is patterned on grief, anger, and fear. The Cubeo reaction to death is to give full rein to grief and anger and to short-circuit as quickly as possible the forebodings that what has happened to one may happen to all. The only deaths I heard about or witnessed were

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The Ancestor Cult

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The ancestors of the sibs, the ***Bekûpwänwa*** (***bekû***: old man; ***pwänwa***: people), literally, the Ancients, form the center of what may properly be called a cult.[1] The ancestral cult is neither elaborate nor well integrated. What it includes are a number of rites in which the ancestors, or Ancients, are invoked. In some cases the invocation of the Ancients has no special magical significance, as when the origin myths are recited at major drinking parties, or again when the ancestral couple ***Xudjiko*** and ***Xudjikü*** come to mourn for the sib dead. The first occasion is simply a remembrance by the sib of their ancestors, and the second is a reciprocal remembering and honoring of their sib by the ancestors. The relationship in both instances is mainly social. On the other hand, when an infant receives a sib name, when cohabiting couples bathe in the river, when youths bathe before dawn and sound the trumpets that embody the Ancients, and finally, when the young boys as well as the mature are whipped by the Ancients, the relationship is then fundamentally magical. On these occasions the Ancients bestow upon their sibmen the specific benefits of bodily growth, vigor, potency, and fertility.

The Cubeo do not assemble all of these rites and cite them as a connected series. The term ***Bekûpwänwa***, in fact, is used to refer only to the Ancients when the origin myth is recited and to the bathing and whipping in the presence of the flutes and trumpets that embody

[1] The ancestors are also known as ***Bekûdowa*** (Old ones), a term that has the connotation of a grouping comparable to that of a sib.

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the Ancients. In the naming and in the mourning ceremonies specific ancestors are invoked by name and by specific kinship reference, as the mother or the grandmother of the sib. In the case of postcoital connubial bathing the ancestors are not invoked either by name or by spell; the bathers merely participate in their magical presence in the river. Some cult activities are secret, others are not. The rule of secrecy applies to the flutes and trumpets. These bear the names of ancestors and may not be seen by women. However, whenever these instruments appear, a specific ceremonial role is assigned to the women. In the whipping rites, which are also initiation rites for boys, the women receive gifts of fruits and berries in the name of the Ancients. In the mourning rites the ancestor trumpets sound their notes of grief, to which the women respond with wailing of their own. That is, when the Ancients enter the maloca they naturally establish a relationship with the women of the house. On the other hand, when the Ancients' blessings are invoked, but without the ancestral presence, the women have no part in the proceedings. The women are ignored during the naming ceremony and during the recitation of the sib mythology. Basically, the ancestral cult belongs to the men. When the boys are shown the hiding place of the flutes and trumpets and are taught their names they are being initiated into a male cult and are drawn fully, thereby, into their roles as sibmen. The social function of the initiation is twofold: to complete the separation of the boy from his mother and align him with his father and his father's brothers, and to draw him from the immaturity of the play pack into the mature company of men. We may speak of these rites, therefore, as *rites de passage* as well, bearing in mind, however, that the passage is a long and gradual one. The Cubeo emphasis with respect to the development of the male is not that he suddenly crosses a dividing line from boyhood to manhood but that he grows. The magic of the initiation ceremony is a magic of growth. Growth magic, it will be recalled, occurs at three stages in a boy's development: at birth, after a year when he receives his name, and then for a series of years after he has entered the play pack.

For a fuller understanding of the Cubeo cult of *Bekûpwänuwa* one would need to know more about corresponding ceremonies among neighboring tribes. Curiously, no other ancestral cult has been reported for the entire Northwest Amazon. Koch-Grünberg, whose knowledge of the tribes of the region extended over many years, did not mention any ancestral doctrines even though he had lived for several months with the *Hehénewa* on the Cuduiarí. But like others who have studied this region his investigations were surely led astray

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769 171 [114] by that ubiquitous and meaningless term *yurupari*, lingua franca and Tupian for "devil," "spirits," "sacred," "mystery," and the like.[2] The Indians have learned to satisfy all foreign curiosity about their sacred practices by uttering the impressive word *yurupari*. All rites involving the use of the sacred and taboo-to-women, trumpets and flutes, have been invariably described in the literature as *yurupari*. We cannot assume, however, that because these instruments are ancestral embodiments among the Cubeo that they are so among all other tribes who use them. One of the striking characteristics of the entire Amazon drainage is the ready way in which form and content separate and recombine in new ways. It has been reported that among the Arawakan tribes in the region the flutes and trumpets represent the spirit of *Kówai* (*Kúwai*), the tribal culture hero (Koch-Grünberg, 1909, I, 187). On the Orinoco, von Humboldt (1852, II, 363) found a cult of sacred trumpets associated with the fertility of fruits and berries. The plant fertility aspect of the instruments is well-nigh universal in the region, suggesting that this may have been the oldest association. Among the Cubeo, too, the whipping ceremonies are [241] quite explicitly associated with the harvest of fruits and berries during the short summer season. Among the neighboring Tucano In- [881] dians, where sacred horns are used in the initiation of young boys, [184] the instruments all have animal names, such as armadillo, paca, and [552] agouti, as well as a little bird. They are reported to be known as tamed animals, but there is no reference in this report to an ancestral cult (Ypiringa Monteiro, 1960).

769 171 As for the Cubeo ancestral features, it may be reasonable to suppose we are dealing with an Andean culture trait that has diffused eastward into the rain forest. Ancestors are prominent in the religions of the Chibchan-speaking Cágaba (Park, 1936), in northern Colombia, and, southwest of the Cubeo, among the Witoto Indians (Preuss, 1921–23; Whiffen, 1915; Steward, 1938), with whom the Cubeo show remarkably close affiliation. Among the Cubeo, we may 769 speculate, a fusion has occurred between an early ancestral cult and 534 a series of other culture elements such as harvest festivals, cultic 174 whipping, male puberty rites, and a secret men's cult in which spirits taboo to women are represented by musical instruments. As will be seen in a later chapter, a similar fusion seems to have occurred among 534 elements making up the complex mourning ceremonies.

Among the *Bahúkiwa* there are five pairs of musical instruments

[2] Actually Koch-Grünberg (1915–16) does give a native term for "*yurupari* dance" (*bekeboikelehapuive*, which has the meaning of "festival of the Ancients"), but he apparently attached no significance to the term.

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that are specifically identified as the *Bekũpwānwa*, and that are used in the whipping and initiation ceremonies as well as in ritual bathing. 534

1. *Emihẹhika* (also known as *haraibipobũ*: whipping staff) is a wide-mouth trumpet of bark wound within a framework of splints. It has a short palm-tube mouthpiece set into a ceramic plate that is mounted firmly to the upper end of the bark. This trumpet is some 30 inches long.

2. *Kwũhũnku* (also known as *Uménahonkũ*) is also a wide-mouth bark trumpet that is over five feet long and is played with one end resting on the ground.

3. *Bwũ* (Agouti) is a long flute of a black palm, also with a mouthpiece set in a clay mount and with two external reeds bound around an opening toward the top. It is about four feet long.

4. *Onpwẹnda* is a flute similar to *Bwũ* except that it has no separate mouthpiece and is only some 30 inches long.

5. *Onpwẹnda kũdjũwe* is identical with *Onpwẹnda* and is the length of a man's forearm. It is the shortest of the flutes.

Bwũ and *Onpwẹnda kũdjũwe* are said to be the strongest and fiercest of the ancestors and are esteemed for the vigor with which they whip. They are referred to as *parihihekũ* (very powerful beings). *Bwũ* is, of course, the founding ancestor of the *Bahúkiwa*. 769 • [614]

Among the *Hehénewa* of the Cuduiarí the largest bark-wound trumpet is also called *Uménahonkũ*. Koch-Grünberg translated this name correctly as "Dragonfly." The name, however, is that of a first ancestor of the *Hehénewa*. [534] [614]

The whipping rites, the Cubeo say, go back to the "first people," who were taught what to do by *Kúwai*. At the beginning, however, it was women who played the flutes and trumpets. They spent so much time on play that they did nothing else. *Kúwai* corrected this. He took the instruments from the women and gave them to the men, warning them never to allow the women to get them back.[3] This is the story that is cited to explain why the instruments are taboo to [784] 769 534 773

[3] A variant account states that the *Bekũpwānwa* had belonged to the women and that the men were afraid of them. The women came out of the forest bearing the instruments and the men ran away in fear. Then *Dekókũ* (Ghost person) learned about this and said, "Women have no right to this." He came down to witness the ceremony of the women. He saw only women and he said to them, "You are women, you have no right to this. Now I am going to take this away from you." He brought the instruments to the men and laid them on their forearms. When the women had the *Bekũpwānwa* they danced all the time and never worked. After the men had received the instruments they allowed one old woman to see them. She turned insane and they had to kill her. Since then women have not been allowed to see the *Bekũpwānwa*.

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769 534 [784] [793] [820] [754] women. The men cautioned me not to speak of the *Bekûlpwänwa* to the women for fear they would be driven mad. A woman who hears about the Ancients will wander about singing their songs until she dies of her madness. If a woman actually sees the instruments, it is felt that she should be put to death by sorcery so that the secret will be kept from the other women.

769 796 The *Bekûlpwänwa* come annually in the summer when a species of palm berry (*konhá*) and certain other fruits and berries are ripe. Of their coming it is said, "They come to whip the boys to make them grow." At the same time, it is explained that if the people did not dance with the flutes and trumpets the berries and fruits would not grow. The *Bahúkiwa* would not assert a magical connection, however, between the two kinds of growth, yet the association would seem to be an obvious one.

[561] As an age grade, youths are known as *hwaïnyó*, but as boys who need whipping for growth they are known as *bahúdjo*, which may be rendered as "bodying." A boy's first whipping occurs when he is no more than eight years old and continues until he leaves the play pack at about 15. Thereafter, as a man he continues to be whipped but under different auspices. As a man he accepts whipping voluntarily. As a boy it is imposed upon him by his elders.

I observed two initiation ceremonies, one among the *Bahúkiwa* and one among its subsib, the *Bahúkûdjawû*.

The *Bahúkiwa* rites were conducted entirely by the younger men of the sib, not by the real elders as I had been led to believe. These younger men were in their prime of physical vigor. One was not yet married but he was very strong, energetic, and exceptionally capable in all respects. They were the men whom the play pack admired and emulated, to whom they attached themselves, and to whom they owed no special respect. The initiators were the fathers and the fathers' brothers with whom the boys could most readily feel at ease.

I was not invited to accompany the small band as they left the maloca in the early morning, the men in high spirits, the boys subdued, although they had been told only that they were going to pick berries. This was sheer euphemism since there are no secrets from the play pack. The gaiety of the initiators is characteristic. Only the women are expected to be afraid and one suspects that much of this is mock fright. Among the initiates was a boy of an in-law sib. But as a resident, a member of the play pack whose mother, the headman's sister, had standing as a household head of the sib, his initia-

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tion seemed natural enough to the *Bahúkiwa*. It is not an exclusive sib cult.

The ancestor instruments lay nearby in a secret place on the river bank, upstream from the maloca, dressed in ceremonial dance feathers (*mápena*) because, as the Indians said, "our ancestors love to dance." (When the trumpets are removed the *mápena* is laid aside). The party first fetched the instruments so that the ancestors might accompany them on berry picking. Intermittently during the morning those of us at the maloca could hear the horns, at times sounding near and then trailing into the distance. The party returned in the late afternoon. The women at their chores near the river bank paused to listen to the low, mournful notes of the oncoming horns. A shot from the canoe was a warning signal that sent the women running for the house, laughing and shrieking at one another to hurry.

The canoe came into sight, low in the water with its heavy burden of berries neatly packaged in baskets of loosely plaited palm fronds. The youngsters were paddling and their escorts played the horns, swinging them from side to side to sound in all directions. Now the women, who had gathered at the rear door of the maloca, ran off together to the manioc gardens, their traditional sanctuary, those in the lead calling to the laggards to hurry.

The river was low and the canoe could not be seen except from the very edge of the high bank. No one, except the ethnographer, came to look. The party unloaded the berries. They bathed, and having bound fresh sprays of fragrant leaves over their buttocks, ascended the steep path. At the top of the bank the men formed themselves two abreast and marched upon the house sounding the horns, the youngsters trailing after them. Only three pairs of the traditional five were used, *Bwü*, *Onpwénda kûdjüwe*, and *Onpwénda*.

The men sounding the horns, as embodiments of the ancestors, assumed a stern and almost menacing manner. This unaccustomed countenance seemed to frighten the boys and they were visibly nervous. The men were not at this moment concerned with the boys, but with bringing the ancestors and their powers into the house. They marched upon the house in the familiar dance step of a long measure and a pause, two long measures and a pause, and then three quick steps. At the pause, the six players swayed and swung their instruments in a high wide arc before them, the two *Bwü* horns in the lead, followed by *Onpwénda kûdjüwe* and *Onpwénda*.

The ancestors did not enter the house immediately but paused at the front plaza. No man came out of the house, not because it was taboo but as a courtesy.

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taboo but as a courtesy. When the ancestors paused, the youngsters went back to the canoe landing to bring up the berries. When the boys left, the ancestors sounding the trumpets circled the maloca counterclockwise, going from the front door to the rear door. When they returned to the front plaza again, men of the subsib who had arrived as guests came out of the house, and taking over the horns, they circled the outside of the house, sounding the instruments to all corners of the clearing. They re-entered the house and a new group, men from a related sib, came out and took the horns from them. As each group completed its circuit of the house it re-entered and was given pupunha chicha.

All the men had had their turn with the ancestor horns when the boys trudged up the path in single file, each holding out before him a tray piled high with berries. Young boys normally provide fruits and berries for the community, as part of playful foraging in the forest. Women sometimes bring in fruit, but in the main such gathering is left to the boys. I assume therefore that the boys at the initiation are ritualizing a traditional role. They bring fruit to the maloca, not to the ancestors, who are *givers* of benefit and not receivers. By the same token, the offering of the youngsters is at this point ritually recognized. The boys set the trays down on the dance floor of the house. Then the men of the house returned to the canoe landing to bring up the heavy bundles of *konhá*. The seven initiates in the meantime were asked to occupy the long guest bench near the door. When the men had deposited the last bundle of *konhá* they gave to each boy a calabash of pupunha chicha as though he were being received as a guest, and they passed among the boys the ceremonial cigar, as another acknowledgment of honored adult status.

When the youngsters had consumed their portions of chicha and had puffed self-consciously at the cigars, they helped the men unpack the *konhá*, arranging all the berries into eight trays and setting them along the rear of the house, the women's quarter. While the trays were being set out, a solitary dancer sounded *Bwü* throughout the house.

When the berries were in place the *Bwü* dancer put aside the horn and began to prepare a switch (*hardmu*) that he had picked at the water's edge.[4] The switch is from a bush that grows quickly, and is wound with sturdy kumari twine. The boys withdrew to the guest bench where they huddled nervously, watching the switch being pre-

[4] Some sibs have a more or less permanent switch that is beautifully plaited and tipped with seed beads. Whipping is called *haraíhume* (*haraí*: to strike; *humé*: bitter, unpleasant).

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pared. Other men picked up the horns and danced. The whipping could not begin before dark and it was evident that the man preparing the switch was working slowly so as not to finish too soon. The deliberation of his movements added to the apprehension of the boys. As the last rays of light in the doorway faded, the boys suddenly leaped from the bench and bolted out of the house. The man who was preparing the whip ran to the doorway and shouted at them to come back. All but one returned. The boy who did not return was a fatherless orphan and a maverick who did not share foraged food with his age mates.

The boys took their seats again and the men resumed dancing with the ancestor horns. They danced until the house was pitch black. A taper was lighted and *Bwü*, represented by the senior member of the initiating group, stepped forward. He dragged the first boy to

Fig 6. *Bahúkiwa* boy.

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796 be whipped violently to the center of the dance floor. He chose an eight-year-old boy, his own son. Normally the most amiable of men, he glowered at the boy, and in a harsh voice commanded him to stand straight, his legs together and his arms above his head. The little boy solemnly obeyed. The father faced his son, poised his whip for the first blow, and waited while the dancers circled them once, sounding the ancestor horns. When the dancers had completed one turn, the man inserted the switch in the far end of the horn and stirred it about to "draw from it the power of *Bwü*." He then struck the boy across the loins with such force that the child ran screaming down the corridor toward the door. His father ran after him and without a word dragged him back. The first blow across the loins left a bloody scar on the boy's abdomen and was to impart sexual vigor, which resides inside the horn. The boy's paternal uncle stepped forward and rolled the second *Bwü* horn along the child's back, starting at the calves and rolling it up to the head. This was to impart growth of stature, that resides on the outside of the horn. The boy had now regained his composure, and his father brought him a calabash of chicha. His father whipped him a second time, in the same way, and this time the boy controlled his fright, emitting only a gasp of pain as the whip lashed across his abdomen, raising a second welt. Again the uncle rolled the horn up the back. His father gave him a second calabash of chicha and the boy returned to his place on the bench, where he displayed his scars to his companions, composed and grinning from ear to ear.

[534] Next to be initiated was the son of the headman's sister, the boy who was not of the sib. The same man did the whipping, using not *Bwü* but *Onpwénda*, the least powerful of the three ancestors they were invoking. I concluded that a father would naturally initiate his own son with the most powerful and the very first of the ancestors, while saving the least potent for his cross nephew. When I mentioned [182] this to the man he assured me I was wrong, explaining that it made [614] no difference who was whipped with which ancestor since their blessings went not to any one person, but to all being initiated as well as to the sib as a whole. The important thing, he said, was not to neglect an ancestor who had been brought to the house. I am inclined to accept this explanation with some skepticism, because the Indians always deny inequality as a matter of courtesy, but they recognize it nonetheless. When informants discussed *Bahúkiwa* ancestors in general terms they all agreed that it was best to be whipped by *Bwü* because "he is the strongest."

This boy was exceedingly apprehensive. Before the first blow

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could be struck he had bolted and had to be literally dragged back. The first blow reduced him to such a state of trembling and hysterical sobbing that I thought he would collapse. He could not swallow the chicha. The men paid no attention to the boy's terror and when he returned finally to the bench, still sobbing, his companions ignored him.[5] The first boy was by this time enjoying himself immensely.

The third initiate was the son of the headman, a boy who was the leader of his play pack. This lad strode confidently forward and raised his arms above his head without command. He faced his age mates, smiled at them, and took the blows without flinching. The next boy faced the ordeal with equal composure. The men waited for the orphan boy to return. When he did not they sent the youngsters to bring him, but they returned very quickly to say that he had run away.

There now remained two very young boys to be whipped. These were treated in a sense as junior initiates, old enough to know the secrets of the *Bekûpwänuwa* but too tender to be whipped very hard. The senior initiator who had begun to whip with *Bwü* was said to have a very hard blow, because of having absorbed the strength of *Bwü* in his arm. He therefore turned the whipping over to his younger brother, who used *Onpwénda*. This man, who was unmarried and therefore closer in spirit to the age group being initiated, assumed a jesting manner. He dragged a little boy forcefully to the center but in a playful manner. He measured his blow carefully, heavy enough for the child to know he had been through the ordeal but without raising a welt. The two blows were spaced farther away from the genital region because the children were too young to receive sexual power from the ancestors yet. The gentle blows meant that growth would still be gradual. At puberty, I was told, a boy receives the full hard blows of *Bwü*. However, since some precocity is welcomed, the full blows, as on this occasion, may precede puberty by some years.

After all the youngsters had been whipped and were seated together on the guest bench drinking chicha, the ancestors, who had been dancing inside the house, now danced about them several times in a close circle, finally leaving in single file through the door. They circled the house on the outside and returned to the front plaza. When they stopped playing, the youngsters rose from their bench and went outside to watch as the men hid the horns in a clump of bushes nearby. Then all cut swatches of leaves and ran through the

[5] It is hardly a disgrace for a young boy to weep. When young adults, young married men, are injured in a drunken brawl, they will also weep freely.

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house, sweeping every bit of ground to remove the traces of the ancestors. They bent low and uttered low cries of *hi hi hi iii iii*, the same sound used when *mihí* is brought in. This is a sound that spirits understand.

When the last traces of the ancestors had been swept out, the men called to the women to return. The return of the women restores the house to its normal condition. Before that it is a man's house, a cult house and not a true domicile. This change was marked by having the guests, who had already taken part in the earlier ceremonies, leave, go down to the landing place, march up the path, and be received at the front door in the usual reception line. What seemed to be the beginning of an ordinary drinking party then followed. However, later that night the women were told to move to the rear and to sit facing the rear door. The torches were put out and some old men fetched the hidden horns to play them in the forward men's section. They danced out again and hid the instruments. When the playing stopped, the women rose, lighted the torches again, and took possession of the *konhá* berries. The headman's wife, in her traditional role, supervised and assisted in the preparation of a *konhá* porridge, and the remainder of the berries were distributed to all the adult women. The porridge was prepared quickly and calabashes of it were sent down to the forward end of the house for the men.

Now the mothers turned to their sons to inspect the welts raised by the whippings. But the boys turned away and the mothers knew enough not to persist. The ceremony was over.

This was a truncated ceremony. Normally, the elders who have danced into the house with the ancestor horns after the lights have been put out dance among the women, while other men thrash the women with switches. Then the adult men take turns in whipping one another. None of this was done, they said, because most of the guests they had invited had not come, and feeling dispirited they cut the ceremony short.

However, I had the opportunity of attending another whipping ceremony at the maloca of a subsib. This one was well attended and the atmosphere was properly charged with excitement, helped by a great quantity of chicha and *mihí*. Yet here too the whippings were confined to the young boys and the women were unmolested. At one point, however, the ancestors danced outside the house, and two boys guarded the door while youngsters pelted the front door with berries. This was done not to frighten the women within but to give them a more vivid sense of the "presence" of the ancestors. This was re-

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peated three times. The ceremony concluded with a chant of the origin traditions.

The men say that in the "old days" whippings were terrifying. One man narrated that when he was a boy he was held by two men in a horizontal position face down. One man held his ankles and another gripped him under the armpits. A third man whipped him at the loins. As each blow struck he was allowed to drop to the ground. This was done three times and not only twice as now. The man added, however, that he was fortunate, because the man holding his armpits was his father, who did not allow him to drop but only dipped him downward. "I have always loved my father for that," he said. Another man said that when he was a boy one man held him by the ankles with his face a few inches from the ground and he was whipped from this position but was not allowed to drop. The point of these two methods, the men said, was that the boy was stretched so that he would grow. Nowadays the boy merely stretches his arms overhead. After the young have been whipped the senior initiator challenges any man to come forward and whip him to test his fortitude. They use a special whip tipped with shell beads. In the course of the night they take turns in whipping one another. Men who think they might involuntarily flinch do not step forward so as not to discredit themselves before the ancestors.

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I never observed the ordeal of the stinging ants, common in the region. Informants said that they sometimes asked a boy to put his arm into a calabash of red stinging ants and to allow the creatures to crawl up his arm and sting him. This, they explained, was merely a test of fortitude and had nothing to do with powers acquired from the ancestors.

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Growth magic imparted by the Ancients continues all through adolescence up to the time of marriage. I have already mentioned bathing with the ancestor horns. Such bathing is most effective during the summer season, and lapses during the winter. A supplementary form of growth magic that is not connected with the Ancients is to soap oneself with the suds from certain plants. Certain emetics also favor growth. A youth who has begun to use growth magic seriously shows almost immediately a marked change in personal qualities. Even if he has not yet broken away from the play pack his bearing has become more manly. He spends more time at fishing and he begins to join hunting parties. He adopts the more somber masculine countenance and walks with a more energetic tread. In one particular case of a boy who had seemed rather backward the transformation was abrupt.

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The Mourning Ceremony

Mourning for the recent dead provides the setting for the most complex and most important of Cubeo ceremonies. These ceremonies, known collectively as *óyne* (weeping),[1] usually take place as late as a year after death, preferably during the dry season when the pupunha palm is ripe. I attended two mourning ceremonies, one among a *Bahúkiwa* subsib and one, a very elaborate affair, among the *Hehénewa*. The last I witnessed from the very beginning.

The *óyne* consists of two parts: a long, three-day section, followed about a month later by a one-day concluding ceremony at which the spirit of the dead is finally evicted from the community.[2] During the first part, masked dancers impersonate many of the familiar beasts, birds, insects, and fish, as well as the mischievous spirits of the Cubeo world. These spirit beings come to mourn, but mainly to turn the people from grief. On this occasion the tribal "grandmother" and her consort, in the form of two great bark trumpets, also arrive to mourn.

Koch-Grünberg, reporting on the same group of *Hehénewa*, says that the trumpets are called *Uménahonkü* (Dragonfly) (1909, II, 151). He was not aware that the name referred to a *Hehénewa* Ancient. There are several possibilities to be considered in accounting

[1] Also *ówinu* (weeping affair).

[2] There are also abbreviated one-day ceremonies for women, children, and men of small extended joint families. The three-day ceremony is most appropriate for a headman.

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for this contradiction. One is that different Ancients are represented at different times. This possibility, though, is one that was never mentioned to me. The origin myth of mourning, it should be noted, refers to *Xudjiko* only. The other is the possibility of error, since Koch-Grünberg also labeled a trumpet used in initiation ceremonies as *Uménahonkü*. *Oýne* and initiation trumpets are never the same.

The dances, rituals, and dramatic representations of these first three days range over a variety of themes, but all have the common purpose of transforming grief and anger to joy. In keeping with the characteristic pattern of Cubeo ritual that begins slowly and solemnly and ends in frenzied disorder, the first phases of the *óyne* also start from the dark mood of grief and anger and end in a sexual orgy. This first part of the *óyne*, in which the emphasis is upon transformation of feeling, is largely dramatic. The second part of the *óyne*, that lasts from late afternoon until the dawn of the following day, carries forward the theme of emotional transformation, ending in fact in true sexual license, when men are privileged to copulate with their sib and phratry brothers' wives. Its main themes, however, are religious and magical, including the aforementioned expulsion of the spirit of the dead as well as the magical absorption of the substance of the deceased into the body of the sib. The latter is presumably accomplished by pounding the exhumed limb bones of the deceased into a powder and mixing them with chicha, which the men of the sib drink.

The women are weepers and have, in the main, a passive ritual role. They huddle together with their nursing infants in the rear half of the house that for the occasion has been partitioned with a six-foot-high fence of poles and leaves set so as to form at the center an overlapping slit opening. The women are not allowed to see what is going on in the male section, while the slit opening allows the men to dance freely in and out of the women's section. Stimulated by masculine-initiated activity, the women burst into fits of ritualized weeping, their only active ritual role. Their proper role is to be acted upon, and to be brought to a point of ritualized sexual excitement so that they can be engaged in ritual and simulated coitus.

The masked dancers represent the nonhuman world of beings, the beneficent and malevolent, the threatening and the ludicrous, as well as the neutral creatures. Their songs (*kwimaiwü*) are mournful and indicate grief for the deceased, but their dances and dramatic representations are of their own world. Each mask generally has its own song and characteristic dance, although the connection between mask, dance, and song is not rigidly kept. As the ceremony reaches

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ing, like a pennant, bark-fringe streamers. The *Borikakŭ* usually dances with *Mávayo*, its compatriot, the red-mouthed aracú. In a joint dance they carry a rope ladder (*towándo*) made of three parallel strands of rope into which wooden rungs are set. Attaching the ladder to a roof beam, they climb and descend.

THE MINNOWS

Although the Minnows (*Emíwa*) wear no masks they are definitely part of the dance ensemble; they have a dance step, a song, and a dramatic role. The Minnows are the youngsters and form a school of fish that presumably stands for the youngsters' play pack.[6] They are a boisterous element, moving in and out among the masked dancers. Lacking masks and, accordingly, formal ceremonial status they play a counterpoint of sheer spontaneity to the more solemn dances of the masks. While the role clearly belongs to youngsters, boys are not limited to it. Prepubescent boys do, indeed, wear masks. Those I saw were Butterflies and I was told that a youngster may dance any role but *Yaví*, the Jaguar. The Minnows play on curious shrill whistles. The whistles resemble a short three-tube Panpipe and are mounted at the end of a stick about a yard in length that is hung with three streamers of bark cloth. The dancers wear ankle rattles and dance in a spiral formation, taking two accented steps forward and then two oblique steps back. They hold their whistle sticks pointing up. They have no particular formation, dancing sometimes abreast, sometimes in line, and, alternately, in disorder. The Minnows do all their dancing among the women, who dote on them and ply them with chicha.

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XUDJÍKO AND *XUDJÍKŬ*

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The "grandmother" and her consort are, for the Cubeo, the truly solemn and sacred element of the *óyne*. Represented by giant 15-foot-long trumpets of wound bark that are bound as twins to a single frame, they are taboo to all the women, as are all ancestral horns. The trumpets are capable only of deep, mournful notes and represent ancestral mourning. It is the grandmother, however, who has come to mourn and not the grandparents. The reason for this is that it is a woman's role to be an official weeper. Men may and do

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[6] It will be recalled that in the story of *Kúwai* and the anaconda, the penis of the anaconda is transformed into four minnows that are given to the adulterous wife to eat.

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weep at an *óyne* but only as partners of women, whom they join in the formal weeping embrace. The ancestral role of *Xudjiko* and her consort is different from that of the ancestor trumpets used in the initiation ceremonies. Some of the latter are regarded by the Cubeo as sib or as phratry ancestors and are incorporated in the genealogies. *Xudjiko*, on the other hand, is a tribal ancestress and, so far as I could determine, is not a part of any genealogy. *Xudjiko* and *Xudjikũ* are constructed for the occasion and are secreted along the river, to arrive at the proper time by canoe. A special place over the grave, in the forward side of the house at the left, is prepared for the twin trumpets, and they are almost constantly played by two men seated side by side on low stools.

THE SIB UNITS

The last group of dramatic characters are the sib units. An *óyne* is normally a phratric affair, each sib attending as a unit to express condolences, to mourn, and to vow vengeance against the enemy. Since the suspicion of sorcery may fall upon any man, even within the nuclear family, the sibmen are in effect required to declare their innocence by the strength of professed grief and anger. Sibmen also appear as masked dancers, but in that guise they have no sib identity. As sibmen they play a role of great solemnity, behaving with meticulous decorum, grim-faced and unsmiling, carrying weapons as signs of male wrath and power. They maintain this demeanor undeviatingly since they perform their necessary ritual observances early, before the effects of chicha, narcotics, and the excitement of the dance have eroded the orderliness with which the *óyne* began.

ORGANIZATION OF THE *ÓYNE*

As a complex ceremony, interweaving many ritual elements and magical and religious themes, the *óyne* follows its intricate course with apparent spontaneity. One does not observe overt central direction; the dancers seem to know just what to do and when to do it. The hosts act as general guides only, not by instructing the guest dancers but by guiding the major phases of the ceremony. In this way they manage to achieve the desired atmosphere of emotional spontaneity. For all its complexity, the *óyne* is well adapted to the segmentary social structure of the Cubeo. It is a phratric ceremony in which each sib acts as a unit in ritual acts and in the dances dur-

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"*Dekóku*[7] has punished you." Then other people came and wrapped the boy in his hammock, put him into a large jar, and buried him in the house. No one wept. After three days an old man began to think what people should do about death. They decided to have an *óyne*. They made dance masks. At first they did not know how to make bark cloth so they made masks of leaves. *Kúwai* came and told them this was not good. In one day *Kúwai* made all the bark-cloth masks for the people. They did not know how to paint the masks and *Kúwai* showed them how. They gathered red pigment and carbon soot, and by midday the masks were all finished. *Kúwai* climbed the duka tree. At the top he cut off the bark and brought it down to make the fringes for the skirt and sleeves. The people then divided the maloca into a men's and women's part. In the men's part an old woman sat down to sing. But soon the real *Xudjiko* came along singing and the people were frightened. But *Kúwai* said, "Don't be afraid. This old woman is *Xudjiko*, who has come to help you weep." The old lady ran away and *Xudjiko* took her place. Then *Kúwai* said, "When other people die do the same thing. Weep for a short time only." He told them to dance and sing. When they had finished *Xudjiko* went away. She no longer comes. Instead they make a horn.

Xudjiko and her consort live at Uaracapuri, the source of the Cubeo. They were the first of the Ancients to die and they were the first to make the bark-cloth masks. The headpieces of the masks are set with feathers; the most prominent vertical feather is said to represent *Xudjikü* and the most prominent horizontal feather is said to represent *Xudjiko*.[8]

RITUAL THEMES IN THE *ÓYNE*

The five main sets of characters in the *óyne* each represent then one major ritual theme: the women represent weeping; the masks, the concern of the living world for the deceased as well as for the living; the minnows, the boisterous character of young men;

[7] The term means "ghost" or "spirit" but it has here the connotation of "Great Spirit." However, since I did not learn of a Cubeo belief in a Great Spirit the allusion is puzzling, and is to be considered as unexplained.

[8] The apparent inconsistency between this account and the previous one referring to *Kúwai* illustrates two strands in Cubeo mythical thought. One strand, nonancestral, focuses on *Kúwai*, a figure of the Arawakan tribes. The other strand is ancestral and is, perhaps, truly Tucanoan. The Cubeo do not reconcile both strands. The question of which version is produced depends on the context, which may be either general or ancestral.

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Xudjiko and her consort, the mourning by the primordial ancestors; and the sib units, the solidarity of the phratry in expressing both grief and anger. The dramatizations and mimetic dances present a variety of minor themes, such as menace and hilarity. If one looks at the *oyne* as a whole, however, and follows the sequence of events from their slow and solemn beginning to their conclusion in a simulated sexual orgy and then in a real one, a single main theme emerges, and that is the sexual interplay between men and women. By contrast to the sexual emphasis, the ritual of dealing with the spirit of the deceased seems almost minor and anticlimactic. It is only at the very end, when most guests have departed, that the ghost is dispatched. The climax of the first part of the *oyne* is ritual coitus, just as the climax of the second part is sexual license. We can therefore describe the *oyne* in terms of ritualized sexual sequence.

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Fig. 11. Mourning ceremony: women's entrance.

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Religion

The religion of the Cubeo has no gods and therefore no worship. Anthropomorphic beings are plentiful in the form of forest monsters, fish, beasts, birds, insects, not to mention the *Bekûpwānuo* and *Kúwai* the transformer. But the Cubeo do not approach these beings and spirits in a supplicatory mood. They establish, rather, a mode of communication, of intercourse, with them, in the course of which specific results, the warding off of dangers, and the positive benefits of body growth and sib growth are expected to follow. Religious attitude must almost inevitably be modeled upon the experiences of relations among people. In Cubeo social life, as we have seen, one neither commands nor submits. People enter willingly into a relationship that will accomplish a specific end. A social relationship among the Cubeo, as we have repeatedly noted, demands a specific atmosphere of feelings, sentiments, emotions. To the Cubeo nothing of consequence can result from an act divorced from its proper mood. In precisely the same way, the Cubeo seek to establish a relationship with a supernatural being.

The Ancients, to recapitulate what has already been described in another context, join the people in drinking, dancing, smoking, and chewing coca. They come to whip the boys and men to make them grow and to give them potency and force in the initiation rites. They are bathed with in growth "magic." As *Xudjiko* and *Xudjikū* they come to mourn for the sib dead. In the mourning ceremony they are invoked by name only and do not appear. The invocation chant, how-

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ever, does not compel them to make the sib child grow. The Cubeo think it absurd to suggest that the *Bekûpwänwa* might need any urging to do for the sib what needs to be done and what they are capable of doing. It is impossible for a Cubeo to say that the *Bekûpwänwa* have withheld a benefit or that they can be made to do more under some circumstances and less under others. What is required – and the Cubeo do not say that the *Bekûpwänwn* have set requirements – is that a proper mode of social intercourse be established and maintained. The spirit and the manner of social intercourse must be correct, however, although not letter perfect. The spirit in which the social intercourse is carried out is more important than the ritual act. Many Cubeo ceremonies are abridged because, as they explain, the mood was wrong. Guests who should have come did not, and in the feeling of disappointment the ceremony is cut short. An error in a chant, in a dance, in a song, or in a ritual sequence is of no importance. Failure to conform to the rules of social intercourse with the supernatural beings, such as the Ancients, may have serious consequences only if the neglect is deliberate. In any case, *Bekûpwänwn* do not punish. They only withhold. In the case of the boy who ran away from his whipping at the hands of the *Bekûpwänwn*, my informants assured me that he would not be deprived of a year's growth. Since they, the elders, were prepared to forgive the youngster his uncontrollable timorousness on this occasion, the Ancients, they knew, would do likewise.

The Ancients are not referred to as "spirits." The term for spirit is *dekókü* and has, for the Cubeo, a more alien connotation than the term *Bekûpwänwn*. The Ancients or the ancestors are referred to by name so that association with them conveys directness and immediacy. I believe that it is for the sake of maintaining a sense of immediacy and of directness with the *Bekûpwänwn* that the Cubeo do not place them in some ancestral abode in some other world. The Ancients, to be sure, are known to have been buried in the ancestral rocks from which they emerged, at the rapids of Uaracapurí and Yurupurí. But the burial place is not their place of abode. Strictly speaking they have no place of abode. The flutes and trumpets that embody them reside in a *caño* near the main stream of the sib. The Cubeo do not, however, claim that these sacred crypts are the residences of the Ancients. The ordinary dead, on the other hand, do have an abode. The point of distinction for the Cubeo is that the ordinary dead have been sent away and are no longer welcome, whereas the Ancients, who are not spirits of the dead in the ordinary sense, are always welcome.

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Apart from the Ancients there is *Kúwai*, who has been referred to here as a culture hero and as a transformer. He is not, as Koch-Grünberg called him, a "god." The Cubeo and the Arawakan tribes in the area share *Kúwai*. Among the Cubeo he is a mythical being who has long since withdrawn from any relationship with people by taking up a specific abode upon the high savannah. There are no rites involving *Kúwai* today, nor are there traditions that refer to any sacred relationship between the people and *Kúwai* in the past. *Kúwai* taught the Cubeo all their useful arts – fishing, cultivation, the making of all major implements. He instructed them in copulation. Illustrative of Cubeo attitudes toward the sexes is *Kúwai*'s constant difficulties with women – all human – and, by contrast, his orderly relations with Cubeo men. It was, as the legend narrates, his disappointments and frustrations in dealing with Cubeo women that led *Kúwai* to take up what is virtually a voluntary exile. *Kúwai* as transformer altered terrain features and created some smaller rivers. His role as creator is a limited one.

Some Indians did speak of a god whom they called *himénihinkũ* (my little soul). This god lives in the sky (*kawáno*) in a house with his wife. He accepts good people into his house and puts bad people in a house for dogs. There is *Uménahonkũ*, an Ancient, but *himénihinkũ* is evidently a Christian doctrine that has been badly understood by the Indians of the Cuduiarí, whose relations with missionaries have been very marginal at best. Those Indians who had missionary contact attributed *himénihinkũ* to Christian teaching and rejected the doctrine as alien to them. They scoffed, particularly at his role as a creator of the world and of man. A fundamental feature of Cubeo religious thought is its reluctance to grant broad and extraordinary powers to any being. I shall return to this point.

Earlier writers on the Indians of the Vaupés have without exception reported "gods," "demons," or a "great spirit" called *Yurupari*. In simple fact there is no *Yurupari*. The term is jargon from the trade language of the Amazon based heavily upon Tupían and is used indiscriminately by the Indians to refer to anything that is sacred and taboo. In the Northwest Amazon region the sacred trumpets and flutes receive the designation of *yurupari* most commonly. But the people will put off any prying into their religion with *yurupari*. I never heard the *Bahúkiwa* refer to *yurupari* except when talking to some white man whose questions they did not regard seriously.

The ancestor beings represent for the Cubeo the only true beneficent "supernaturals" with whom they have relations. But we note that they are not credited with extraordinary powers. They do not

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771 move against other powers or forces. That is to say, the Cubeo know that growth, potency, and fertility are part of the ordinary scheme of things and that there is no force conspiring against such ordinary developments. The *Bekũpwãnwa* are not thought of as jealous, sensitive, threatening, or likely to take offense. It is noteworthy, too, that the emphasis in growth is upon the individual far more than it is upon the more abstract concept of sib. The Ancients will not guard the people against any unexpected dangers. To guard against menace, whether general or specific, there are specific measures that the sibmen themselves must take.

771 All other anthropomorphic beings in the Cubeo cosmos are either
776 menacing, mischievous, or harmless. Menace from supernaturals, however, is relatively moderate, not to be minimized but lacking in dread. The only menace that truly frightens the Cubeo is that which they attribute to persons.

776 The *abũhuwa* are cannibalistic forest monsters, the bogy men of the children. At the mourning ceremonies they are made to appear grotesque and absurd and hence harmless. There are many stories of human encounters with *abũhuwa* as ogres. In most, the *abũhuwa* are overcome. They can be outwitted, caught, and killed.

The story is told of an old woman alone in the maloca with two young children. *Abũhuwa* entered the house and the children were able to escape by climbing up to the house beams. But the old woman was caught. An *abũhukũ* rolled her between his palms until she became all soft and he sucked her out from the top of the head in the way a Cubeo child eats a banana. He hung her skin over the branch of a tree. When the others of the maloca returned they saw an *abũhuwa* family within. They set capsicum afire at the door of the house and as the *abũhuwa* sought to escape its acrid smoke, that is noxious to all unwanted spirits, they struck them down with clubs and killed them all.

Another tale is told of a hunter who, in the woods at night, was seized by the throat from behind. It was an *abũhukũ*. He struggled with it and killed it with a knife. In the morning he went to see it and it had taken the form of a sloth. *Abũhuwa*, it is said, are all very [754] hairy. Their armpit hair makes a very potent sorcery "poison." Any man who is bold enough may seize an *abũhukũ* and tear his armpit [821] hair. It is said that the ogre can be seized only when the moon is in eclipse or is red and low in the sky. The hair must be from the left armpit and can be cut only with a corn husk. It is cooked until reduced to ash, and then is mixed with water and allowed to dry to a paste in the sun. The paste is kept in a small gourd dish sealed with

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her own manioc garden is still another demonstration of linkage-autonomy. Much early marital discord can be attributed to a woman's assertion of independence from her mother-in-law's claim upon her labor. Her manioc plantation is a zone of autonomy vis-à-vis her mother-in-law as well as vis-à-vis her husband.

6. *Sib males and the children's play pack.* This age-grade relationship is still another example of linkage-autonomy. The young boys attach themselves as individuals or as a body to the adult males in economic and in ceremonial activities, but always have the option of detachment and of re-forming themselves as an autonomous play pack.

7. *Ceremonial friendship.* This, as we have already mentioned, may be regarded as a mode of autonomous selection among more distant kin of relationships that are parallel to the prestructured ties between siblings. The sibling relationship is the traditional linkage and the ceremonial friendship is its autonomous counterpart.

8. *Concept of Growth.* The capacity of a society to continue to grow through the proliferation of linkages must also be related to cultural concepts that define the values of social growth. It is clear that linkages do have positive value for the Cubeo. There is great satisfaction in multisib drinking parties and ceremonies that bring together a great many people from many sibs. This suggests some appreciation for growth of the phratry. As for the sib, the feeling for its growth is even more strongly expressed. There is always fear that it will diminish in size and there is pleasure in contemplating that one's own sib is larger than another. But these feelings that one comes upon for growth of phratry and of sib are rather indefinite. They are not clearly voiced, they are not embodied in specific ritual or traditions, and concern for growth is not delegated to any effective authority. The headman may be charged with holding the community together, but he is not expected to make it grow. On the other hand, the cultural concept of growth that is stressed is that of the individual body, of corporeal growth. The clearly articulated Cubeo concern is that a body grow big and fat, that the limbs, the forearms, and the calves, in particular, should bulge. The ancestral cult and postnatal magic including the naming ceremony play on this theme of corporeal development. The ancestral cult does, of course, bring out the value of potency, but again the emphasis is upon personal sexual power and not explicitly upon growth of the sib. I know of no Cubeo magic that deals specifically with growth in numbers. An interest in such growth is only implied. In short, the point to be made is not that the Cubeo lack interest in social growth, but that they place their

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POLARITY - COMPLEMENTARITY

The complementary role of conceptual opposites is, of course, a universal type of cultural patterning. Cultural distinctions occur in variations of the pattern. Under any circumstances, the general pattern of polarity-complementarity produces a mode of order and hence of social cohesiveness. In Cubeo life, polarity-complementarity is very strongly expressed. Its most prominent area is the male-female polarity. From a purely sociological point of view, the male-female opposition would seem to be a reflection of the patriliny-patrilocality of the sib, in which the women are outsiders as wives and outsiders-to-be as sisters and daughters, while the men are the permanent group. To this basic social condition the Cubeo add a variety of symbolic modes of opposition. Those that have been described include opposing but complementary roles in all ritual. In the ancestral cult and in mourning ceremonies these distinguishing roles of men and women are very sharply delineated. In ritual, men supply order, while women give spontaneity. Since female spontaneity in ritual is evidently complementary to masculine formalism, it is to be understood that we are dealing here with a somewhat dramatized rather than with a "pure" spontaneity. Generally speaking, and using the Durkheimian categories broadly, the men represent the sacred side of life and the women the profane. However, in the case of the Cubeo the female as profane is a complement of the sacred and not altogether outside of it.

From a more secular point of view, the male-female distinction can be expressed in terms of a collectivist-sectionalist dichotomy: the men represent the collectivism of the sib, the women the sectionalism of the individual household. The contrast between the gregariousness of the male play pack and the solitariness of the little girls is perhaps the most pointed demonstration of this distinction. Another illustration of this pattern is in the form of the dance in which the girls slip under the linking yokes of the men's arms, occupying, so to speak, interstices of the dance pattern. The collectivist-sectionalist distinction is also clear in economic activities. Hunting and fishing are commonly collective, whereas female-prepared food, that is, manioc cake and tapioca porridges, are largely sectional (household). If we were to attempt a hypothetical linking together of the various patterns of Cubeo culture we could argue that the principle of linkage-autonomy is related to the broad principle of male-female polarity-complementarity, on the grounds that the male side in relation to the female

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121 not be accepted only as a statement of uniqueness, although the sci-
571 entific value of a unique configuration is undeniable. Each general cultural pattern may ultimately be unique, but since uniqueness is a relative concept the possibility of some more general typology is a real one. Thus the hypothetical statement of a Cubeo over-all pattern should have more than specific applicability.

571 What kind of model, then, does Cubeo culture follow? Socially
593 the root model is that of the solidarity of brothers. It is around this root concept that the characteristic principles of Cubeo kinship and sib and phratric organization develop. The solidarity-of-brothers concept is, as we have seen, both set off from and bound to all
[428] other relations by the universal human doctrine of order: polarity-complementarity. Since primogeniture, though recognized, is minor, the male sibling solidarity is in effect nonhierarchical; it is basically lateral. And it is this fraternal model, we might say, that gives the
571 strong egalitarian cast to Cubeo society. The ancestral cult, in all its
593 aspects, is the particular Cubeo phrasing of the sacred character of
● 769 male sibling solidarity. It is not a worship of the past, nor does it
614 single out for special distinction any particular ancestral line except
615 from the standpoint of the phratry. But the phratry, having mainly a ritual rather than a corporate character, has only a limited effect upon the patterning of Cubeo life. The ancestral tradition does differentiate the sibs. The ancestral cult, on the other hand, serves rather to promote the lateral solidarity of the male siblings who are the roots of the sib.

571 The significance of the social pattern based upon the solidarity of
593 the male siblings has been noted by Radcliffe-Brown as characteristic
61 of primitive societies organized in patrilineal lineages. It is indeed a fundamental and elementary social pattern subject to a wide range of variations. In the case of the Cubeo, their entire elaboration of kinship, lineage, sib, and phratry follows very closely the lines of the elementary pattern. If the close approximation of a social structure to an elementary basic pattern may be taken as a mark of simplicity, then on this score Cubeo social structure may be characterized as "simple." It is understood, of course, that male sibling solidarity is only the focal point of a larger social pattern that includes the polarity-complementarity relationships of affinity-consanguinity, and the male-female as well as the near-distant relationship.

571 If Cubeo social structure can be derived from an elementary model,
152 so can its emotional structure, or ethos. The Cubeo ethos seems to be
181 based upon the doctrine of harmonizing each particular mode of emotional expression with an appropriate social activity. Stated